Spirituality of the Middle Ages

1. Medieval Mysticism: Selected Studies
2. Benedictine & Cistercian Monasticism: Studies & Texts
3. Francis of Assisi & the Franciscans: Classic Texts
4. Dominic, Meister Eckhart & the Dominican Mystics: Classic Texts
5. Other Medieval Mystics: Classic Texts

1. MEDIEVAL SPIRITUALITY & MYSTICISM: SELECTED STUDIES

See the “Bibliographies of Medieval Christianity” for a more complete listing of books on the history and theology of the medieval Church. The following are limited to works on spirituality:


**2. BENEDICTINE & CISTERCIAN SPIRITUALITY: CLASSIC TEXTS**

*RB 1980: the Rule of Benedict* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1980). Benedict’s Rule has served as the basis for Western monasticism for 1500 years. A work of spiritual and practical genius, notable for its humanity and its moderation (obvious when compared with its sources). This is the best recent translation—with the Latin text on facing pages.

Bernard of Clairvaux, *Selected Works*, Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. G.R. Evans (New York: Paulist Press, 1987). The great leader of the reform of Cîteaux (the Cistercians); one of the great analysts of the degrees of mystical love; also the polemical opponent of Abelard and a respectful, but harsh critic of papal overreaching. This is a good selection of his works.


**3. FRANCIS of ASSISI & the FRANCISCANS: CLASSIC TEXTS**

Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. Ewert Cousins (New York: Paulist Press, 1978). Bonaventure was the superior general of the Franciscans, a superb scholastic theologian and, of course, a mystical writer of the first order. The theme of the ascent of the inner person to God is ancient, but Bonaventure brings the Franciscan depth and warmth of feeling to this age-old theme. This volume also includes Bonaventure’s classic *Life of Francis*.


4. DOMINIC, ECKHART & THE DOMINICAN MYSTICS: CLASSIC TEXTS

Meister Eckhart, *The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*, Classics of Western Spirituality, ed. Edmund Colledge & Bernard McGinn (New York: Paulist Press, 1981). Eckhart was one of the most radical of the medieval mystics: he writes using brilliant paradoxes, striking imagery, provocative claims—yet was schooled in all the subtleties of medieval scholasticism. His orthodoxy was challenged, and some of his positions were posthumously condemned.

Henry Suso, *The Exemplar*, Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. Frank Tobin (New York: Paulist Press, 1989). Suso (1300-1366) was a Dominican mystic and the great successor to Meister Eckhart. His *Exemplar* includes his autobiography as well as his mystical works, especially the *Little Book of Eternal Wisdom* and the *Little Book of Truth*.

Simon Tugwell, ed., *Early Dominicans: Selected Writings*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1982). It has key documents from and about not only Dominic but his great co-worker and successor, Jordan of Saxony. The bulk of the text is Humbert of Romans’ great work, *Treatise on the Formation of Preachers*, which better than anything else defines Dominican spirituality. The introductory essay by Tugwell is superb.


5. OTHER MEDIEVAL MYSTICS: CLASSIC TEXTS

Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins, eds., *The Writings of Julian of Norwich: A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman and A Revelation of Love*, Brepols Medieval Women Series (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006). Julian of Norwich was one of the most remarkable mystics in the Christian tradition. This recent edition is simply a superb tool for students: it includes a critical edition of her Middle English texts, together with an abundance of notes on Julian's theology and on her Middle English vocabulary. The two accounts are arranged side by side so that students can carefully trace how Julian expands her reflections and modifies her views in her later text. See also the older translation of Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, *Julian of Norwich: Showings*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1978).


*Pursuit of Wisdom and Other Works by the Author of the Cloud of Unknowing*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1988).